

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 762

To authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for voluntary contributions on a grant basis to the Organization of American States (OAS) to establish a Center for Caribbean Basin Trade and to establish a skills-based training program for Caribbean Basin countries.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 31, 2007

Mr. FORTUÑO (for himself and Mr. BURTON of Indiana) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for voluntary contributions on a grant basis to the Organization of American States (OAS) to establish a Center for Caribbean Basin Trade and to establish a skills-based training program for Caribbean Basin countries.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Caribbean Basin Trade Enhancement Act of 2007”.

6 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of
7 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—CENTER FOR CARIBBEAN BASIN TRADE

Sec. 101. Findings.
 Sec. 102. Establishment.
 Sec. 103. Activities.
 Sec. 104. Administrative provisions.
 Sec. 105. Sense of Congress.

TITLE II—CARIBBEAN BASIN SKILLS-BASED TRAINING PROGRAM

Sec. 201. Findings.
 Sec. 202. Establishment.
 Sec. 203. Activities.
 Sec. 204. Sense of Congress.

TITLE III—GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 301. Report.
 Sec. 302. Definitions.
 Sec. 303. Authorization of appropriations.

1 **TITLE I—CENTER FOR** 2 **CARIBBEAN BASIN TRADE**

3 **SEC. 101. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds the following:

5 (1) Increased globalization and economic inte-
 6 gration are requiring countries throughout the world
 7 to rethink their competitiveness strategies and to
 8 take affirmative steps to improve their trade capac-
 9 ities.

10 (2) Countries of the Caribbean Basin can ben-
 11 efit from assistance to improve their trade capac-
 12 ities.

13 (3) The Organization of American States
 14 (OAS) has relevant experience in developing trade
 15 capacity initiatives and programs of countries of the
 16 Western Hemisphere. In particular, the Department

1 of Trade, Tourism and Competitiveness of the OAS
2 has successfully trained trade negotiators, particu-
3 larly within the context of negotiations to conclude
4 a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

5 **SEC. 102. ESTABLISHMENT.**

6 The Secretary of State is authorized to make a vol-
7 untary contribution on a grant basis to the Organization
8 of American States to establish a Center for Caribbean
9 Basin Trade (hereinafter in this title referred to as the
10 “Center”) in accordance with the provisions of this title.

11 **SEC. 103. ACTIVITIES.**

12 The Center shall carry out the following activities:

13 (1) Provide government officials of Caribbean
14 Basin countries, including trade negotiators, with
15 technical assistance in developing and implementing
16 trade agreements.

17 (2) Assist government officials and private sec-
18 tor representatives of Caribbean Basin countries to
19 further assist firms in developing export readiness,
20 such as developing firms’ commitment, identifying
21 primary target markets, selecting market entry
22 strategies, developing an international market plan,
23 and developing distribution networks in other coun-
24 tries.

1 (3) Provide training and consulting services to
2 Caribbean Basin countries to upgrade port facilities,
3 strengthen security measures, upgrade customs pro-
4 cedures, and modernize other infrastructure critical
5 to trade.

6 (4) Provide training and consulting services to
7 government officials and private sector representa-
8 tives of Caribbean Basin countries on import re-
9 quirements of major trading countries for the Carib-
10 bean Basin region, including the United States, as
11 well as financing mechanisms.

12 **SEC. 104. ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS.**

13 The Secretary of State, acting through the Assistant
14 Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs and
15 the United States Permanent Representative to the Orga-
16 nization of American States, shall work with the Organiza-
17 tion of American States to determine the location, staffing
18 requirements, programs, and working methodology of the
19 Center.

20 **SEC. 105. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

21 It is the sense of Congress that a thorough study and
22 analysis should be undertaken to determine a permanent
23 location of the Center.

1 **TITLE II—CARIBBEAN BASIN**
2 **SKILLS-BASED TRAINING**
3 **PROGRAM**

4 **SEC. 201. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) Studies demonstrate that greater emphasis
7 needs to be given to secondary education in coun-
8 tries of the Western Hemisphere, including Carib-
9 bean Basin countries, in order to bridge the wid-
10 ening educational and technology gap in such coun-
11 tries, which ultimately hinders job growth.

12 (2) Access to education is fundamental in help-
13 ing to eradicate the poverty which limits economic
14 growth in the countries of the Caribbean Basin.

15 (3) Countries of the Western Hemisphere have
16 consistently lagged behind the countries of Asia and
17 other regions, suffering a self-perpetuating cycle of
18 low-growth and increasing poverty.

19 (4) The community college system in the
20 United States provides skills-based training for
21 United States workers and is a useful model for a
22 skills-based training system for Caribbean Basin
23 countries.

24 (5) A skills-based training program established
25 under the management of the Organization of Amer-

1 ican States (OAS) would be an effective means of
2 addressing the needs of individuals and economic
3 concerns in the Caribbean Basin region.

4 (6) Such a program would provide individuals
5 with the skills required to improve their standard of
6 living and, together with employers, would further
7 facilitate the economic integration of the countries of
8 the Western Hemisphere.

9 **SEC. 202. ESTABLISHMENT.**

10 The Secretary of State is authorized to make a vol-
11 untary contribution on a grant basis to the Organization
12 of American States to establish a skills-based training pro-
13 gram for Caribbean Basin countries (hereinafter in this
14 title referred to as the “program”) in accordance with the
15 provisions of this title.

16 **SEC. 203. ACTIVITIES.**

17 The program shall carry out activities to support a
18 productive workforce in Caribbean Basin countries.

19 **SEC. 204. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

20 It is the sense of Congress that the program should
21 focus on mid-level technical education and training for the
22 workforce in Caribbean Basin countries, utilizing existing
23 educational facilities, cooperative private sector and gov-
24 ernment entities, and Internet-based training.

TITLE III—GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 301. REPORT.

Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 302. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.**—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

(2) **CARIBBEAN BASIN COUNTRIES; COUNTRIES OF THE CARIBBEAN BASIN.**—The term “Caribbean Basin countries” or “countries of the Caribbean Basin” means the countries and territories specified in the matter preceding paragraph (1) of section 212(b) of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (19 U.S.C. 2702(b)).

1 (3) OAS.—The term “OAS” means the Organi-
2 zation of American States.

3 **SEC. 303. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

4 (a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
5 authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of State
6 to carry out this Act such sums as may be necessary for
7 fiscal year 2008.

8 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—Of the amount appro-
9 priated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations
10 under subsection (a), it is the sense of Congress that up
11 to \$10,000,000 should be available to carry out title I of
12 this Act and up to \$10,000,000 should be available to
13 carry out title II of this Act.

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